What areas of Australian life matter to you?

Posted on 29 August 2011

Richard Aedy, host of Life Matters on ABC Radio National and **Michael Stutchbury**, Economics Editor of The Australian tell us about what's important to them for Australia's progress.

Richard Aedy

I love the idea of progress. I always have.
I was five when we first landed on the moon, nine when the Queen opened the Opera House and 10 when Ian Chappell's side routed the English cricketers, sending them home defeated and very twitchy indeed about quick bowling. It was all progress...it was all good.

To listen or read more from Richard Aedy click here

Michael Stutchbury

Australia has become one of the world's richest nations. For the first time in a century or so, the average Australian earns more than the average American. Our soaring dollar is financing our biggest ever overseas holiday boom. And we've been building up to the biggest mining and energy boom in our history. We dodged the worst of the global financial crisis that is imposing hard times in America, Britain and Europe. And we're on the doorstep of the world's most dynamic economic zone. The numbers don't lie: we are truly the Lucky Country.

To read more from Michael Stutchbury click here

The views expressed in these opinion pieces are the personal views of the individuals concerned and they do not represent the views of the ABS. The intention of these opinion pieces is to generate debate and discussion about how Australians view progress. These views will assist the ABS in measuring progress in the future. The ABS continues to be independent and objective.

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Comments

#1 Bret Veisen
29/08/2011 12:07:47 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

The ability to have access, mobility, security and freedom in my daily life. The notion that hard work will open doors and lead to exciting opportunities. The good weather and winning the Ashes.

#2 Pauk
29/08/2011 12:29:03 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

Housing unaffordability, equity of wage growth and accuracy of data. On that, when is the abs going to adjust the very out of date population clock and update the statement about emigrants returning to OZ? Seems accuracy in the ABS is a matter of politics.

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#3 Janice Ollerton
29/08/2011 1:30:31 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

What matters to me? Creating a considerate society, one that is mindful of the rich diversity of cultures, talents and interests we all bring to it, one that purposefully seeks to include others and especialy those on the margins of our society - people living with disability, people who are homeless, people from emerging communities and indigenous Australians (especially those in remote Australian communities). I think a considerate society is also mindful of its responsibility to live within its means from a global perspective, and to not waste its resources.

#4 Serhat (MAP Team)
29/08/2011 1:37:33 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

Hi Paul Thank you for your input on important areas of national progress. Re. migrant statistics and the population clock, thank you for you comments, we will refer your query to the relevant area in the ABS.

#5 Julie
29/08/2011 1:41:59 PM equity, sustainability, civic/community responsibility, education, health, housing

'Progress': length of time people have to wait on council housing lists and public surgery lists; number and frequency and breadth of coverage of public transport routes; number of bus shelters that actually do shelter from wind and rain; ability to go out at night without having to wade thru drunk obnoxious teens/twenties; ability/power of police to act against public nuisance and perpertrators of crime; number of sentances that include supervised community service; number of community/family social workers & counsellors and number of family contact time with these services; ability to access to mental health facilities especially acute and long-term in-patient care; ability to make a same-day appointment with a GP; ability to access community home nursing care &meals; service if sick at home alone; teacher/student ratios in public schools; gap between lowest and highest paid wage and salary earners; contribution to public purse by highest paid workers & profitable companies/corporations; number of people in Australian cities that have shops and other essential services within walking distance; number of people who have offices/workplaces close enough to walk/cycle to work, number of dwellings with compostable toilets; number of dwellings/workplaces with solar panels or individual wind generators; number of dwellings/workplaces with water tanks; number of dwellings/ workplaces with vege gardens; number of workplaces with covered bicycle parking; number of workplaces with commuter shower facilities... have to think some more on the rest :)

#6 Megan
29/08/2011 2:31:16 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

A properly functioning media, starting with the problem of Murdoch domination.

#7 Serhat (MAP team)
29/08/2011 4:36:34 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

Hi Megan, thank you for your comment. How would you describe a properly functioning media?

#8 Mrs Margaret Ryan
29/08/2011 9:44:43 PM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

What matters to me is getting the widow allowance changed back to being a pension. As it is now only newstart(the dole) by another name and comes under all the same regulations as the unemployment part of centrelink, it means that those in receipt of this benefit are expected to exist on an income that is below the Henderson poverty line.

To me it seems that the governments past and present do not care about widows and they should care that they are forcing such a part of the australian population to live in poverty.

#9 Craig
30/08/2011 8:17:11 AM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

A quality democracy with widespread community empowerment and involvement in local decision-making, rather than the current state of decay with increasing centralisation and conservative views dominated by a professional political class increasingly out-of-touch with society.

I think we'll need a very large systemic change to get there though.

#10 Heather Kjoller
1/09/2011 10:44:59 AM What areas of Australian life matter to you?

Social justice - a country without massive inequalities of wealth distribution and 'life opportunities'. This means providing solid educational opportunities to all - redressing distribution of public monies to private schools would be a good start to boosting public education!! Also, delivering employment at all life stages is necessary - one way to avoid the so called 'drain' of baby boomers on public health etc is to ensure they can work as long as they wish i.e. end age discrimination in the workforce! Also, the provision of viable unemployment allowances is critical to maintaining confidence among those without a job.

And finally - tolerance... racial, religious, gender, etc - whatever happened to the great Australian attitude of 'we're all in this together - let's share'? It's not all about the individual!!

#11 Peter
2/09/2011 9:57:50 AM What areas of Australian life matter to you? Knowledge/education

A real problem that relates to the future is a perceived lack of understanding about our past. For example, how many Australians really understand the way we are governed and how our system of Government came to be? One measure of progress would be to test what children know now and to re-test every year. We are a constitutional monarchy, a highly successful form of democracy and one that we Australians have adapted for our own use. We have secret ballots to decide government every few years. We have a legislature, an executive government and an independent judiciary, as well as a free press. Our head of State is the Governor General. Our head of government is the Prime Minister. We have a Cabinet to make executive decisions about our future. There is a Senate and a House of Representatives. Every child should know about our constitution, our flag and our system - the facts not the fancies. Measure this and increase this knowledge and we will be making progress.

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